



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Yellowstone/Grand Teton News Release

Proposed Winter Use Rule for Yellowstone and Grand Teton Published

The National Park Service today published a proposed rule in the *Federal Register* for temporary winter use management in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway.

This is a separate and distinct public review period and comment process from that of the Temporary Winter Use Plans Environment Assessment and draft Finding of No Significant Impact, both of which were released for 30-day public review on August 20, 2004. The proposed rule reflects the preferred alternative and draft Finding of No Significant Impact in the Temporary Winter Use Plans Environment Assessment and is a necessary step in the administrative process in order to implement the decision.

The proposed winter use rule provides for a wide range of appropriate winter recreational opportunities including strictly limited and regulated snowmobile use while carrying out the National Park Service's mission to protect the natural and cultural resources of the three parks.

The rule implementing a temporary winter use management plan would allow 720 snowmobiles per day in Yellowstone led by commercial guides. This is below the historic use levels in the park and is somewhat lower than the level of access allowed during the last half of the 2003-2004 winter season. Commercial guides would not be required for the 140 snowmobiles per day allowed in Grand Teton National Park. Snowmobiles operating in Yellowstone would be allowed only on roads prepared for snowmobile and snowcoach use, which are a portion of the same roads used for summer access in the park. All snowmobiles entering the parks would be required to be four-stroke machines that meet the cleaner, quieter "Best Available Technology" standards.

Operating under a temporary winter use management plan for up to three years would give visitors, employees and residents of the park's gateway communities the information they want and need to plan for the near term in order to minimize economic impacts on gateway communities. It would also provide the National Park Service the opportunity to gather additional, real-time data to be used preparing permanent regulations for winter use in the parks.

The proposed Winter Use Rule is available for review online at <http://www.nps.gov/yell/winteruse-ea/>. Comments can be submitted using an online form found at the above web address or by mail to Winter Use Proposed Rule, Yellowstone National Park, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190. Comments must be received by midnight on October 7, 2004.

At the conclusion of the 30-day review period, the National Park Service will review public comments and incorporate changes to the rule as appropriate. A final rule will be published in the *Federal Register* in late October or early November to guide winter use management of the parks for up to three years beginning with 2004-2005 winter season.

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